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ABSTRACT

These symposium papers report (1) collaboration between the University of Bath and the Preschool Playgroups Association to develop training materials for expanding parents' awareness of their preschool children's developmental needs and ways to meet them; and (2) the development and implementation of a community-based approach to early childhood care in the Philippines. An abstract (by K. Loganathan Mutharayan) of a third presentation describes features of agamic psychology and the implication of agamic psychology for child development research. In the first paper (by Colin R. Palmer and Diana E. Dobson), the primary aim of the British materials development effort was to produce learning resources illustrating strategies currently operating in preschool groups which in various ways enable parent involvement. A secondary aim was to determine whether a voluntary organization and a university could successfully collaborate in the development of training materials for the organization. The project used a learner-centered formative evaluation model which ensured that materials met specifications. It was concluded that the collaboration was effective and the model was appropriate. Problematic aspects of the collaboration are identified. The second paper was authored by Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino. This report of child care in the Philippines discusses the socio-economic-political background of the increased need for child care services and describes child care needs. The origin, development, and implementation of Parent's Alternative, a community-oriented program now serving the poor, deprived, and oppressed sectors of society on a long-range basis, is described in detail. Full papers for the abstracted presentations may be obtained from the editors of the conference. (RH)

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SYMPOSIUM VI C : Community Involvement in Preschool Education

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Parents and Preschool Group: Training Materials

Colin R. Palmer and Diana E. Dobson

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

One of the principal aims of the Preschool Playgroups Association (PPA) is *to enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups.* Its function is therefore essentially two-fold: to provide for the development of the child and to provide for the development of the parent. The Association perceives these two functions as having a symbiotic relationship with the development of the child being encouraged through the development of the parent which is stimulated by a growing awareness of the child's developmental needs.

This process is achieved through community preschool groups which are run as a voluntary activity by parents. They cannot exist unless the following are found:

(1) premises in which to hold them,
(2) parents to lead them day by day,
(3) parents to manage them,
(4) money to fund them, and above all
(5) commitment to continue them.

The recognition of the value of this particular form of preschool education has developed gradually since the PPA was founded in 1961. At that stage, playgroups were seen as a very inferior alternative to state-provided nursery education and when the Education White Paper *Framework for Expansion* was published by the Secretary of State in 1972 (Cmnd 5174,

1972), the Association expected to see a rapid and permanent decline in the need for parent-run playgroups. In the event, the anticipated expansion in nursery education only occurred in very localised pockets. More importantly in the first ten years of PPA's existence, the parents involved in those early groups began to realise that there were some very positive virtues in a system where parents themselves took direct responsibility for the involvement in the preschool provision for their own children.

As this awareness grew, the Association found itself developing a dynamic all of its own. Since very few parents were in any sense trained for the tasks they had begun to undertake, a demand for training appeared very early on. This demand was met but in a very piecemeal fashion depending on what was available locally and there was no nationally recognised curriculum of any sort. Despite this, demand for training was high. Some very useful courses were developed and the limited resources available were widely used.

As the Association's aim to provide for the development of the parent as well as the child evolved, so did the style of training and in 1975, a nationally recognised curriculum, *Guidelines for a Playgroup Foundation Course* was published (Pre-school Playgroups Association, 1975). Stimulated by response to the new curriculum, the Association began to develop alongside it courses for training its own tutors. Both of these initiatives encouraged the use of existing curriculum materials which, by 1975, included slides, films, books and leaflets.

After a period of five years, the Association reviewed the curriculum guidelines and in so doing identified some major new concerns. These included the need:

(1) to encourage and stimulate parental involvement,
(2) for more and new training materials for student and tutor use,
(3) for training the trainers or tutoring the tutors in the use of new learning media, and
(4) to validate training materials.

Awareness of the latter is just emerging.

This then was the starting point of the project which had the following aim: *To develop learning resource materials illustrating effective strategies currently operating in pre-school groups which enable parents to become involved in a variety of ways*. There was also a second aim which was to see if there was any substance to our belief that voluntary organisations and universities could pool their experiences and skills in attempting the solution of training problems facing the voluntary organisation.

Parental involvement was identified in terms of three topic or component areas:

Topic 1: First Impressions

Attention here was to focus on the parents' first approaches to the preschool group and the very early days of their membership of it.

Topic 2: Learning Together

This topic was to illustrate one of the issues central to the Association's philosophy: the development of the parents through a growing awareness and knowledge of their childrens' developmental needs and how to meet them.

Topic 3: Branching Out

The theme of this topic was to demonstrate how involvement in a preschool group could encourage parents to have a wider interest in their community and its needs after their children had moved on to full time schooling.

TARGET POPULATION

The project aimed to produce resource materials that would stimulate discussion rather than present a didactic view. It was also important to recognise that while course students were the principal target audience, it was the tutors who would actually decide whether to use the new materials or not. Thus tutor needs were a crucial consideration and the resource pack had to be acceptable to two different target groups.

SIGNIFICANCE

In order to achieve the Association's aim, it is essential that trained and experienced people are available sometimes to initiate, always to support community self-help projects and that appropriate learning materials exist for them to draw on. Enabling groups of adults to work harmoniously together is no easy task even in relatively affluent areas where parental motivative is already high. When parents are very young and living in decaying, depressing environments or feeling alienated by their poverty or race, it takes great skill to create the kind of self-help community activity epitomised by the playgroup movement. Yet if it can be done, there are great benefits for families many of whom have already rejected whatever form of statutory provision may be available for their children.

The PPA has 13,340 member groups and 3,240 individual members spread over 44 Country Associations which are linked to 11 regional centres. The latest figures (Preschools Playgroups Association, 1984) show that 36,478 people attended recognised playgroup training in 1982–83 and 4,300 attended tutor-fieldworker training. The topic of *parental*

involvement was invariably part of the curriculum. Approximately 55% of member groups are run by a committee of parents and whilst this is not the only indicator of parental involvement, it does suggest that there is still a long way to go before parental involvement reaches the desired level.

DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The approach underlying the development of the resource materials was that of a learner-centred formative evaluation model and its strengths have been given elsewhere (Evans, Impey and Palmer, 1983). Briefly, these are as follows:

(1) The model is particularly useful as a predictive tool. It can provide evidence at an early stage of what is likely to work and what is not. In this way, it ensures that resources are used efficiently.
(2) The systematic nature of the process ensures that issues such as objective analysis, content structure and the sequencing of learning tasks are carefully scrutinised before the production of materials commences. This ensures that important training issues which would necessitate a major rewrite will not be raised late in the production process.
(3) The process is immediately responsive to the needs of the trainer and the trainee in that the formative evaluation component allows for desired changes to be introduced and trialled promptly.
(4) The people primarily concerned with creating the learning materials and those primarily concerned with gaining the evidence of the effectiveness of the learning materials do not become distanced from each other. By sharing similar tasks, the mutual understanding of each other's role is enhanced.

Structurally, the model moves through five phases and at all times, there is an interplay between evaluation and creation, shown diagramatically in Figure 1.

(1) Initial analysis: Here, the activities centre on analysis of needs, establishing objectives, identifying teaching points, concepts and principles.
(2) Preparation of 'form': As the form or shape of the outline evolves, it is constantly scrutinised by the evaluation team who look for deficiencies and also for possible alternative ways of treatment. Initially, this is at the atomistic level (down to small clusters of teaching points if needs be) and later as a totality.
(3) Preparation of 'drafts': This phase is critical and requires the evaluator to act as a consultant-partner in the creation of the materials. The close interaction at this stage of the development is particularly

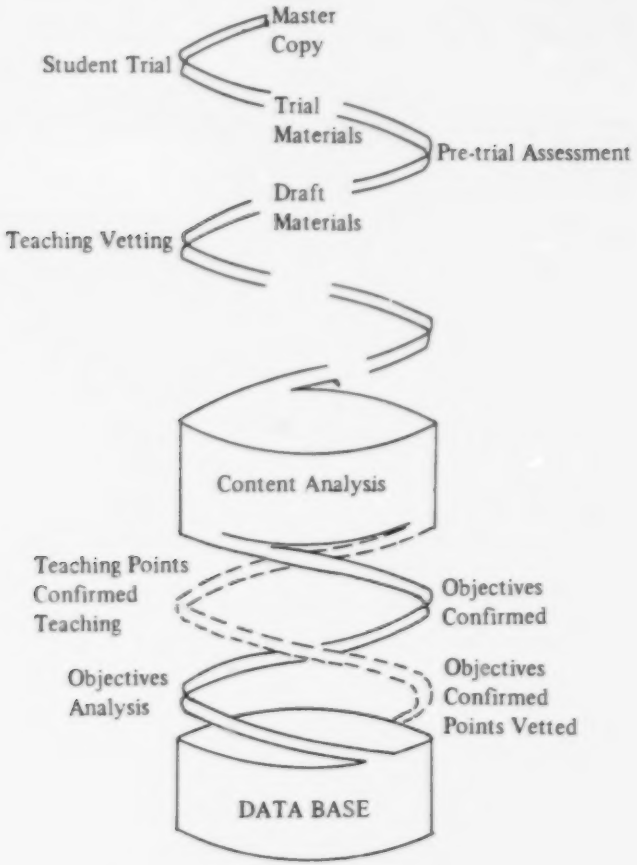

Figure 1
Five Phases of the Model

important when the materials are concerned with concept formation and our experience with the development of other similar ones has vindicated the strengths of the model. When the drafts are completed, the evaluator's task is simply that of technical vetting, that is, identifying factual errors.

(4) Preparation of 'trials': The model here dictates that the materials are considered from the target population's viewpoint. If subject matter specialists find them 'boring', 'too leading', 'too slow', too ... whatever but the students find them 'good', 'interesting' and 'correctly paced', it is the opinion of the target population which takes precedence. It is essential that the subject matter experts realise the

importance of this emphasis at this stage. The major concern is to ensure that the materials succeed in enabling the learners to gain access to the concepts, procedures, principles and factual content of the subject. Attention is focussed on whether the problems examined could have been presented more sharply and succinctly and whether the exercises and aids to thinking devised have helped the learner to appreciate the concerns of the subject matter experts. Those best able to judge, if this is so, are the learners not the subject matter experts. Several versions may have to be prepared but experience shows that this is unlikely other than with isolated sections of the materials.

(5) Preparation of master materials: This becomes a straight-forward matter in the light of the feedback obtained from the trials and the finished materials are unlikely to require subsequent revision, thus making summative evaluation (with its use of relatively large trials and consequent extensive revisions) likely to be of only limited value.

This approach was particularly applicable to the development of the PPA training materials for six reasons.

(1) The time available was limited so that a lengthy in-depth development was not possible.
(2) The amount of money available was severely limited and restricted the number of individuals engaged to a small number of key personnel.
(3) Only general statements of aim were available and detailed learning objectives were unknown.
(4) The range of subject matter for inclusion was extremely large and critical selection of issues was important if the learners were to be exposed to the concepts, principles, procedures and factual matter in an effective manner.
(5) There were two distinct target populations with different needs, namely, tutors and students. Little was known of the needs of the former in relation to resource-based learning other than that previous experiences of it would be slight.
(6) It was important to involve the PPA in all aspects of the work so that the venture represented a true collaboration.

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The basis of the development was the fusion of the training/educational expertise and production facility with the Educational Services Unit of the University, the subject matter expertise and practical experience of volunteer training within the PPA. At the centre was a bipole made up

of a small Headquarters Team and a Consultative Committee. The interactions between the various elements of the development programme are shown in Figure 2.

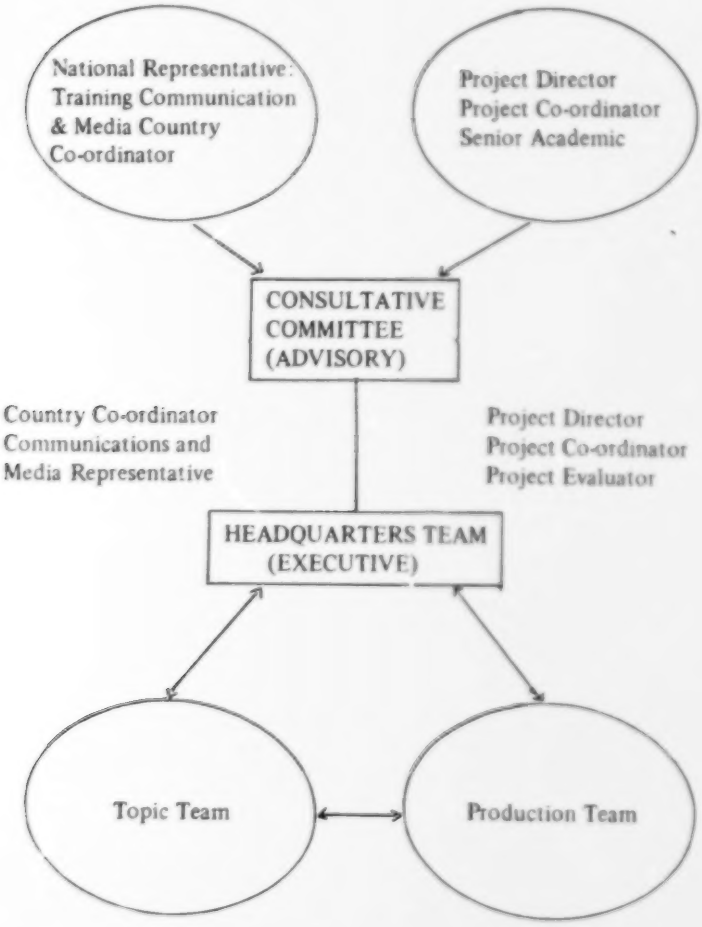

Figure 2: Interaction Between Elements of the Development Programme

The Consultative Committee monitored the development and advised the Headquarters Team which, in the final analysis, was responsible for any success/failure. This Committee, through its local Country Representative who is also in the Headquarters Team, arranged the contacts with the local branches which supplied the groups and individuals whose

activities, observations and experiences formed the data base of the resource packs. It also arranged the contacts necessary for evaluation input: identifying individuals willing and able to participate.

Responsibilities of the Headquarters Team relate to the following:

(1) Providing Information.
This it did through literature searches, carrying out small-scale investigations, contacting informed/experienced individuals and drawing upon its own experiences.

(2) Co-ordinating Activities.
Multi-group tasking was a potential nightmare since materials were recorded out of sequence in many different locations involving many PPA volunteers. Production Team–Topic Team overlap was a crucial interface. Since the topic areas were considered by separate teams, consistency of approach and style had to be maintained.

(3) Administration.
Financial control, preparation of reports, servicing the Consultative Committee and providing secretarial and clerical support.

(4) Stimulating Ideas.

Association members from the locale formed three Topic Teams, each having the responsibility for the following:

(1) defining topic objectives,
(2) identifying detailed subject content, structuring that which was selected and deciding on the medium of presentation, and
(3) creating the materials with the production team.

They worked primarily from their homes and preschool groups, coming to the university as and when it was necessary.

PRODUCTION OF THE MATERIALS

Fieldwork for the project was confined to the country of Avon. The main reasons for this decision were:

(1) The County offered a very wide range of environments from which to draw examples since it includes multi-racial inner city communities in Bristol, prosperous suburbs, a variety of villages and small to medium-sized towns.
(2) It was administratively simple to liaise with only one PPA County Association.
(3) Communications between the University of Bath and the county were good and travel costs were low.

A learner-centred formative evaluation model was the backbone of the project. This provided the continuous and rapid feedback needed to ensure that the design and contents of the materials met the specifications demanded of them.

PHASE 1

Three field-work teams were formed from Avon PPA volunteers. Each comprised three members; one an experienced tutor, another an experienced field-worker (area organiser or branch visitor) and the third a less experienced branch visitor. Their first task was to formulate the objectives for each of the three topics which formed the basis of the project. This was done as a series of meetings in January, 1983 in which initial drafts prepared by the Director and Co-ordinator were discussed and modified. Once the objectives had been agreed, the same process was used to identify the outline content and the medium by which its separate parts would be treated: print, video-recording or audio-recording.

A multi-media approach was adopted so that the widest possible range of stimulus material would be available to tutors and students. Video and audio tapes would be useful during a course session but audio tapes had the added advantages of being available for pre-sessional work at home. With approximately 80% of homes in the United Kingdom owning an audio cassette recorder, virtually every student would have access to one. Some form of supportive text was needed for tutors providing background notes and guidance on the use of the materials and this was extended to include quotations and extracts from relevant publications which tutors could photocopy and give to students to extend the scope of their discussions and stimulate further reading.

In the weeks immediately following the initial meetings, the field team-members sought local groups and individuals with whom the source materials for the three topics could be recorded and the Co-ordinator and Senior Technician from the Educational Services Unit made six visits with field team-members to view a variety of locations. These visits had three main purposes:

(1) To check the suitability of premises for video-recording; light and space being the major concerns.
(2) To assess the suitability of the activities presented in the preschool groups. The perfect group was not sought but the obviously atypical had to be avoided.
(3) Most importantly, to discuss with the parents involved what the project was about and what their contribution could be.

Some of this work was also undertaken by the field team-members during their day-to-day contacts. They were particularly adept at identifying

individual parents who could be invited to join in interviews and group discussions.

PHASE 2

Activity during the following four months was focussed on the collection of the course materials and an exploration of the priorities and practices of tutors in planning their courses. As recording sessions were completed, the field teams began the preliminary analysis of the tapes.

Television recordings were made at five different locations and a further location was used to gather slides augmented by audio-recordings. Visits were also made to gather audio-interviews and additional audio-material was recorded at the university. In total, eleven parents were interviewed at home and a further seventeen in the studio. Five 'under fives' were also recorded to illustrate the effects of adult involvement on their use of language.

By releasing part of its tutor training programme, Somerset PPA enabled evidence of tutor usage of multi-media materials to be obtained. Six important factors were identified.

(1) Tutor receptivity and evaluative attitudes toward learning materials are critically dependent on their quality. Clarity of image and sound are important influences.
(2) Lack of familiarity with equipment can be a strong disincentive to the use of new material in a small but significant proportion of tutors.
(3) Materials, be they audio, video or print, need careful structuring and sequencing, matching their (the tutors') mode of use. Some redundancy of information is necessary to avoid too much cross referencing.
(4) Student viewing extracts should be brief, maximum eight minutes each, with a brief introduction.
(5) Video and audio-recordings should have an introductory section giving an overview of the contents and their use.
(6) Supporting text is necessary and should include background information about the support material, information on timings and detailed content of recordings, examples of their possible models of use and supplementary reading and background texts.

This information was a critical factor in the development of the project. Further evidence of the way tutors approach audio-visual materials was gleaned by monitoring some individuals for a month as they prepared for forthcoming courses.

The preliminary analysis of the televised material was carried out in the university by field team-members who completed this part of their work

in July. Field team-members also undertook the preliminary analysis of the audio-recordings in their own homes.

PHASE 3

This phase of the project was in fact divided into two distinct sections. The first priority was to complete a draft to Topic 1 so that the whole design could go through a pre-trial evaluation with a target group. Two members of the field teams working with the assistance of the project Director took the responsibility of preparing the audio-tapes. These took two forms. The first was primarily designed to introduce a topic and was suitable for replaying in the homes of course participants if the course tutor decided this was appropriate. The second form was designed to be used under direct tutor control. It was made up of two parts, an introduction/guide to the tutor on its use followed by extracts for student listening. The Co-ordinator and the senior television technician prepared the video tape which had the same structure as the second audio-tape. The Co-ordinator drafted the text based on supporting information provided by field team-members and the information gained on tutor usage of multi-media resources materials. The text included details of the timings and outline content of the recordings, background details of the extracts, sample schemes outlining possible uses, selected extracts from books and journals, and suggestions for further reading. Alternative layouts, house-styles and formats were considered under the guidance of the university's graphics designer.

The pre-trial evaluation took place in early August. The major concern at this stage was to identify:

(1) Errors of fact.
(2) Better/alternative sequences of content.
(3) Deficiencies in presentation and layout.
(4) Inadequacies of image and audio quality.

No errors of fact were identified and sequencing of content was, in general, acceptable. For both the text and one of the audio-tapes, it was felt necessary to break the content down into smaller subsections. Other changes required were of a minor nature and both image and audio quality were highly praised.

In the light of these findings, the production team proceeded to revise Topic 1 and to complete Topics 2 and 3 for field trials.

PHASE 4

The field trials took place in November and early December, drawing on the assistance of Wiltshire PPA tutors and groups of students in Avon and Wiltshire. These trials were conducted under realistic conditions of

use and sought to establish the extent to which the materials achieved their purpose for the two target population sub-groups.

The materials were well received by both tutors and students. The latter found the contents very relevant and the speakers and situations they saw and heard easy to identify with. Again, only minor amendments were required.

A small but significant proportion of tutors found difficulties in setting up the video replay systems. Their difficulties were overcome by incorporating in the booklet a flow diagram illustrating how to connect and tune a recorder and television set.

In this, the final phase of the project, the materials were revised in the light of the field trials and the master recordings and artwork prepared. These were formally handed to the Association on 1 February, 1984.

OBSERVATION

Two pertinent issues permeated this project. Could a voluntary organisation and a university successfully collaborate in the development of training materials and was the model (learner-centred formative evaluation) applicable?

The short answer to the first question is, 'Yes!'. However, a number of problems did arise and individuals attempting to carry out similar development would be advised to take note of them.

(1) Communication between the people involved is a very familiar problem in any decentralised working structure. It is particularly important when some of those people are unpaid. They have willingly given their time and have a commitment to the work. However, that commitment must be seen to have been worthwhile and valued. How it relates to the overall project needs to be carefully explained and regular reports on the project's progress are essential.

(2) When some individuals are being paid a salary while others receive only expenses, it is important that everyone understands who is salaried and why that salary is being paid. If this is not done, misunderstanding can arise and resentments build up.

(3) Flexibility of time/appointments is crucial. Volunteers often operate outside normal working hours and family priorities are paramount. Hence, appointments may have to be cancelled at the last minute if illness occurs or father needs the family's transport. This can produce problems with studio time unless some allowance is made at the planning stage.

(4) The shared meeting ground of the academic world and the voluntary organisation is a sensitive territory. Each needs the other but either can be fully aware of the pressures and priorities under which the other operates. Both may be totally committed but with very different motives. An awareness of this is essential.

(5) Heed the advice of the Consultancy Committee in the selection of volunteers to help in the work. Every organisation has its 'parish pump politics' and it is perilous to ignore this aspect. Nevertheless reserve the veto on who will enter the teams (workforce) for even the most dedicated volunteers do not necessarily have the skills required.

(6) Be prepared to involve the volunteers in tasks that are outside their formal remit. For example, if an individual has arranged for colleagues to be interviewed in the television studio, have that individual in the control room at the time of the recording.

What has been written in the body of this paper makes it clear that the learner-centred formative evaluation model underlying the project provided an excellent framework for the development of the materials. At each stage, the evaluation correctly identified problem areas and the success of the model can be recognised in the small number of changes demanded at the field trial stage.

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Parent's Alternative: a Community-Based Approach to Early Childhood Care in the Philippines

Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Childcare in the Philippines has traditionally been the primary concern of individual families or more particularly that of the parents. In the great majority of cases in typical Filipino families, the husband/father is obliged to earn a living and support his family and this gives him the position of being the symbolic head and disciplinarian within the family. However, fathers are also concerned with and involved in providing guidance and emotional support to the children even as they consider the responsibility of assuring the economic base of their families their primary role. On the other hand, the wife takes charge of the household chores, budgeting, and child caring, rearing and character formation. Also, wives do their share in providing additional income for their families. Taken as a whole, parents are expected to take full responsibility for solving the problems associated with the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of their children.

However, the traditional notion of childcare being a primarily family concern has been changing for the past few years. An increasing number of the Filipinos are beginning to realise that many of the childcare problems experienced by individual families are the result and a reflection of the deeper social ills affecting Philippine society. The inattention and neglect of the state's responsibility in childcare is in itself a socio-political issue.

The grave socio-economic-political crisis spawned by the martial law government in the Philippines over the last decade has plunged countless families into severe deprivations and difficulties that have wreaked havoc on the physical and mental well-being of the children, not to mention that

of their parents. A World Bank study by Parvez Hasan, East Asian chief economist, showed the 'growing uneven income situation in the Philippines'. In 1975, the study found that 40% of the total Philippine population 'lived in absolute poverty'. This, of course, entail problems for the children such as malnutrition, lower resistance to diseases, limited funds for medicines/hospitalisation, less chances of acquiring a formal education and others. The results of the Philippine government's Operation *Timbang* (Weighing) as of December 1978, covering 5,115,753 children, showed that 78.6% suffer from malnutrition and only 21.4% were normal. In terms of mortality, 74 out of 1,000 Filipino children die before their first birthday. As for education, for every 100 who entered Grade I in school year 1965–66, only 62 graduated from Grade VI in 1971 and only 26 finished fourth year high school in 1975.

Inadequate income, unemployment, underemployment, incapacity to work among parents, broken homes or death of parents or guardians compel the youth under 15 years old to work even though elementary education is free. The money for school expenses drain out the family purse for basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter. Thus, 18 out of every 1,000 Filipinos are working youth (under 15 years of age), including some who work even as early as seven years old—the age for admission to the first grade.

It is reasonable to assume that all of the above statistics have risen in the last few years by virtue of the continuous drop in the real income, the unabated rise in prices of goods and services, the expanding number of unemployed and underemployed, and other socio-economic problems. Consequently, an increasing number of parents preoccupied with economic concerns are less able to attend to the emotional, intellectual, material and physical needs of their children. In addition, the political and labour policies of the Philippine government have considerably reduced the scope of options for individual and collective actions of the working population in exercising and promoting effectively their political and economic rights necessary for the upliftment of their families' impoverished conditions.

In other words, parents are hindered by the socio-economic-political crisis from fully attending to the emotional, intellectual, physical and material needs of their children. Complicating this is the negative effect on the children's perception of their fellowmen and society because of the rise in social problems such as crimes, prostitution, drug abuse and others brought about by poverty.

This situation brings us to the aspect of the state's responsibility in childcare. While the individual families still assume the primary responsibility in the day-to-day caring for the rearing of children, the state has an obligation too in providing support services that augment and enhance the efforts of the parents. For instance, the corrosive effects of inflation, low wages and high taxes on family real incomes could be offset by the relative accessibility of social services such as health care, day-care centres,

and the like. This is especially true in times of grave societal crises such as the one experienced by the Filipino people at present.

However, such state-initiated childcare delivery systems are, to say the least, pitifully lacking. Long-range programmes for the care and education of preschool children are practically non-existent. If programmes do exist, they are sporadic rather than sustained and systematic, expensive, urban-centred and/or institution based. For instance, the government has erected a multi-million dollar modern children's hospital through loans from the International Monetary Fund which caters only to a limited number of children. Even the education of childcare specialists are geared to the needs and experiences of developed countries.

The private sector and the various churches in the Philippines have been more active in this regard. Several day-care centres, kindergartens and other specialised schools/institutions have been set up by groups or individuals interested in childcare. However, these are mostly found in the big urban centres and cater to the middle and upper classes in view of the prohibitive costs they entail. The churches or church-related institutions on the other hand have also set up several centres for children, particularly those coming from poor families. However, these are mainly focused on orphans and handicapped children and thus reach only a small percentage of children.

In effect, a majority of the marginalised Filipino families still have very limited alternatives in ensuring proper care, rearing and education for the children. Usually, they depend on the support of their extended families, particularly in terms of caring for the children when the parents are out making a living. From time to time, some families also get financial and/or material support from relatives who are better-off economically. If the parents are literate and have enough time and energy, they are primarily the ones who initiate the children to letters and numbers.

Thus, there are two ways in which the prevailing social, economic and political inequities in Philippine society today affect childcare. First, they have caused the deprivations and difficulties suffered by the families which, in turn, reduced the capability of parents to attend fully to the physical, emotional, intellectual and material needs of the children. Second, the lack of resources and opportunities entailed by the mis-priorities of the state in the organisation and distribution of economic, political and social services have reduced the families' scope of chances to cope effectively with those deprivations and difficulties and its consequent effect on the children. To these may be added certain traditional/cultural norms and beliefs regarding childcare, rearing and education that stunts the development of the child such as the notion that only classroom teaching is 'education'.

There is therefore an intrinsic relationship between childcare problems and the success or failure of coping actions of the families on the one hand and the families' social existence which in turn is linked to the economic

and political structure of Philippine society on the other hand. Thus, the traditionally individual family concern with respect to childcare assumes a social dimension because of its roots in economic, political, social and political issues.

Consequently, attempts at resolving the problem must also take into account this social context. This means that solutions must extend beyond the framework that focuses only on the specific question of improving childcare by providing and teaching parents with the necessary tools and skills in proper childcare or by instituting welfare programmes on particular aspects of childcare, rearing and education. For instance, coping with malnutrition cannot be tackled simply by teaching the parents and the children about proper nutrition since they do not have enough money to acquire nutritious food. Efforts towards increased food production or higher wages must complement nutrition programmes. Likewise, specialised programmes for child education would be hampered unless related problems such as the lack of resources of participating families to support the programme would also be looked into. On the other hand, welfare programmes, especially of the dole-out type, reach only a small number of people, create dependence on such programmes and even unwittingly create needs that could not possibly be met.

It might be argued that attempts at solving the structural/societal problems affecting childcare and for that matter other familial concerns is a long-term proposition whereas problems regarding childcare needs immediate attention. In this regard, it may be suggested that coping actions should be conceptualised on the basis of a differential relatonship between specific types of problems and specific types of resolutions.

To confine coping actions, however, to a fragmentary approach is to lose the intrinsically sociological aspect or, more precisely, the sociological root of the problems relating to childcare. Notwithstanding the importance and immediate necessity for practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable programmes for childcare, it must also be recognised that these programmes would be greatly hampered if the structural causes are not resolved fully or at least in part.

In other words, childcare delivery programmes must adopt a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. This means that for a childcare programme to be truly effective in terms of full human development, it must not only focus on the formal aspects of childcare, rearing and education but also in the process, be able to relate with or even help in solving other problems affecting the families like unemployment, poverty and low wages. Moreover, families involved in such a programme must be helped in linking their problems whether in childcare or in other areas to structural causes. In so doing, a holistic and interdisciplinary childcare programme helps in the physical and mental development of the child as well as in promoting or facilitating the restructuring of the social order that impinge upon the family's chances to cope with those deprivations and difficulties which

undermine the development of the children and the whole family. Potentially, this merges into political action.

Two points need to be stressed along this line. First, the solutions to the families' problems in childcare assume a more than individual character precisely because of the social dimension of their problems. The active participation of the people is therefore crucial and childcare programmes must encourage their participation not only in the solution of childcare problems but also in decision making involving other critical issues which are of social, economic and political significance. In this respect, the community is the best setting for a holistic and interdisciplinary programme for childcare.

Efforts in mobilising the people must bear fruit in the establishment of community organisations which are the primary venues of the people for airing their problems and working out possible solutions collectively. In the process, they are not only able to solve the short-term problems relating to childcare but also able to recognise the potential power of an organised community. Moreover, under these circumstances, problems related to the operation of a childcare delivery programme could be more easily resolved through the community's material and manpower resources.

Second, resolving the problem of childcare in the context of a holistic and interdisciplinary approach leads to active changes (or attempts at such changes) in both childcare delivery systems and in the environment. This presupposes that the people involved in the programme conceive their family's world in an ideal shape into which they would like to transform it through their action. Action in this sense is social practice because it entails the exertion of physical and mental energy with the purpose of shaping their environment so that it fits their projected interpretation. On the other hand, their practice enriches and clears up further their conception of their projected family's world.

As a result of this intrinsic relationship between the idea/planning and the action/practice, a necessary aspect of a community-based childcare programme is the conscientisation of the community members in order to consolidate their various views and notions about childcare and its relation with social structures, and raise these views to a higher level of understanding and awareness. It is on the basis of a sufficiently clear understanding and awareness that short and long-term goals and programmes of action can be formulated within the context of the circumstances and opportunities in the community that shall guide the people's practice in improving childcare delivery systems and helping in promoting or facilitating the restructuring of the social order.

A holistic and interdisciplinary community-based childcare programme may therefore be conceptualised as a conscious and collective endeavor insofar as it entails the conscientisation and organisation of the people in a community in order that they solve their problems in childcare and its

structural causes in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. The community-based programme is essentially different from institution-based/specialised programmes in that the latter approaches childcare in the formal sense while the former might be visualised as substantial in that it also focuses on the contents of the individual's and community's privations and the actual resources and means which they command to make their strategies work.

Parent's Alternative (PA) is an attempt to see childcare in this framework. Though it was only recently that the staff of PA started shifting their attention to the community-based approach, it has had rich experiences where lessons could be drawn that further enhances the concept of a community-based childcare delivery system so badly needed in the Philippines and possibly in other Third World countries.

PARENT'S ALTERNATIVE EXPERIENCE

Beginnings

Begun in the latter half of 1980, PA was originally an attempt by a group of concerned mothers to respond to the immediate and pressing needs of children of political detainees. Separated from one or both parents, these children—especially those of preschool age—found themselves sadly lacking in parental care and attention. The initiative to set up a childcare centre came from the mothers of these children who were once political detainees themselves or whose husbands have or are still detained. They felt that individually they could not shoulder the huge task of being both father and mother to their children. However, if they pulled their time, efforts and resources together, they could effectively provide a more healthy and stimulating atmosphere for the growth and development of their children. Given the very difficult and stressful circumstances the children and their families were in, the help of other similarly situated mothers and various sympathetic groups were sought. After a series of formal and informal gatherings centering on the discussion of proper childcare and early childhood education, these mothers decided to set up initially a small day-care centre in a middle income community.

At the start, it had merely a handful of children. They were mostly the children of parent volunteers who took turns in managing the day-to-day operations of the centre. This centre-based day-care tried to resemble closely the home environment and not be merely a baby-sitting centre for custodial care. The day-care had three main features. First, it served as the extension of the family by closely approximating and supplementing parent's care. It also aimed to impart the parent's views on national freedom, justice and democracy in order to help the children make sense out of the detention of their parents. Second, it was an aid, though still inadequate, to the children's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. This was done by providing meaningful social experiences,

training in certain basic skills and creating various opportunities for learning. Finally, the day-care centre served as a positive intervention in the specific crisis situations experienced by the children as a result of or related to the indefinite detention of their parents.

Soon enough, the day-care centre began to attract other parents and thus was forced to accept the children of friends of the original volunteer families. Eventually, there arose a need to expand the programme and operations to include a children's home where parents may leave their children for longer periods of time in order that they may attend to very important family matters. However, only those children really needing emergency care were accommodated. Adapating the Filipino extended family care system, it tried to provide the children with the warmth and security of the home.

On the other hand, the programme for the day-care centre was broadened to include an outline for general childcare with special emphasis on early childhood education. The curriculum plan included children activities for the child's entire day at the centre such as play, meals, naps and conversations – all within a certain degree of freedom balanced with systematic control. It was thought that such a setting would encourage the development of the child as a whole person.

At the peak of its operation in 1982, it had a little more than 50 children under its care. It was no longer manageable at this point to operate on a voluntary basis and rely on benefactors and friends for its financial support. There was a need for more competent professionals in childcare who were willing to work on a full-time basis. Thus from a volunteer staff of three persons in the beginning, the programme had to provide for the hiring of additional personnel to include child experts, consultants, teachers, health workers, parent's aides and clerical staff. Also in place of the old centre, a two-door apartment was rented to serve conveniently the expanded purposes of the programme.

On the whole, the programme was able to live up to expectations and meet the immediate and pressing needs of the children of political detainees. The centre was a welcome respite for the mothers who had to think of the more important tasks of earning a living and following up matters pertinent to the release of the husband/father. It was also a better option to an empty home, the streets or even the detention centre itself where the children were sometimes forced to stay for lack of a better place. For the parents who badly needed the benefits of preschool education but could not afford its costs, the day-care centre offered relief from their heavy burdens. Very little expense was involved in its operation at the start since most of its resources came from benefactors and friends.

However, with the expanded concept of the centre came new problems and challenges. Children of political detainees were no longer the majority in the group being serviced by the day-care as some of the parents have

been released while other children eventually had to go to formal schools when they reached school-age. It was at this point that the old concept of the day-care and children's home had to be reviewed and evaluated. First, the original idea of a core of volunteers to see through the programme's implementation was no longer feasible. Since the programme was slowly becoming institutionalised, greater demands were expected from the staff in terms of professionalisation of skills and management abilities. Second, the programme was becoming just like most of the institution-based day-care centres which catered mainly to middle-class families to the neglect of the poorer sectors of society and the community. Even in the middle-class community where it was located, its services were not necessary since there were other similar competing centres. None of the children in the programme lived in the above-mentioned community. In effect, it was also thus conveniently detached from community events. Finally, it was becoming very expensive to maintain the expanded centre. There were not just enough benefactors willing to sponsor the new children who came for its services while overhead expenses such as rental of the place, salaries to personnel, classroom materials and equipment have risen considerably.

It was at this point that the volunteer parents felt the original idea of the day-care centre had outlived its purpose. After a thorough evaluation of the old programme, the group decided to phase out some of its services and reorient and redirect its basic thrusts to serve the broader community, particularly those from the poor, deprived and oppressed sectors of society on a long-range basis.

Present Thrust

Even at its initial organisation, PA has already included a community outreach programme as part of its long-range objectives of popularising its concept of an alternative child-care system by reaching the wide number of under-priviledged families in depressed communities. In line with this, summer vacation programmes were attempted in an urban poor community near the day-care centre which included workshops and consultations with mothers on proper childcare and encouraging community leaders to set up a childcare centre in their area. However, because the community outreach programme is just an extension service, not much was realised in terms of the setting-up of a people initiated child care-centre. At the most, it provided a glimpse of what could be encountered in the event that more emphasis would be placed in the community outreach programme of PA.

With the phasing out of the old concept of an institution-based day-care centre and the affirmation of the necessity to serve the broader community, the community outreach programme became the principal thrust of PA. With this, the volunteers and the staff started to review its concept

of a day-care by focussing on the following considerations as prerequisites to a successful community outreach programme:

(1) The most needy of a childcare programme are the marginalised sectors of society who cannot afford the expensive institution-based childcare centres. They are those hardest hit by the socio-economic crisis plaguing Philippine society and yet are also the ones who lack or cannot avail themselves of quality services for the care of their children. The programme must therefore be geared to the poor, deprived and oppressed sectors of society.

(2) If a childcare programme is to be implemented among the marginalised sectors, it must take into consideration the economic constraints of would-be participants which may tend to dissuade active participation in such a programme. On the other hand, it must also be recognised that the marginalised sectors are also the most receptive of a programme that would lighten their heavy loads and thus give them the opportunity to concentrate better on their key problems in hand. In addition, such a programme would invariably solicit material and moral support from sympathising individuals and groups in or out of the country. A programme must therefore inculcate upon the target participants its importance while making sure that it does not put excessive strain on the already strict budgets of marginalised families. While donations from sympathising individuals and groups could be expected, it would be reasonable to assume that this would not suffice to sustain all the expenses of a fully-functioning childcare programme.

(3) Due to economic constraints, the programme must be brought closer to the target participants instead of the previous set-up of PA wherein clients/participants lived in areas far from the day-care centre. The most suitable location would therefore be within the community and/or within a community adjacent to the workplaces of the target participants.

(4) In order to save on overhead/operational outlays, the programme must maximise the local manpower and material resources that could serve the different aspects of the operation of the programme. This would not only reduce the financial outlays but also develop among the people the spirit of creativity and self reliance in matters that concern their whole community.

(5) A crucial consideration in the sustained operation of such a programme is the expected lack of competent teachers who would be willing to work full-time with minimum or no financial renumeration. This would be more highly felt when the programme is already fully implemented or has extended to other communities/areas of the country. It is to be expected that a number of volunteer professionals would be more than willing to lend their expertise to the

programme. Again, it would be reasonable to assume that such help would only be on a consultative or part-time basis. Thus there would still be the lack of full-time professional teachers/caretakers for the programme. The only alternative would be to train local people who are willing to be trained and have the necessary qualifications as well as sufficient free time.

(6) Though the PA curriculum for child education may still be used as the general guide, its specific contents and thrusts must be reformulated in order that it would be more suitable and responsive to the needs and particularities of the community and its people. It must be recognised that there are so many variable factors operating in a community that are radically different from the highly controlled/managed situations in the previous day-care centre. A key step towards this is a thorough and in-depth social investigation of each target community, its people and the children.

(7) Aside from the curriculum, programmes must also exercise enough flexibility in terms of operations. The management of the programme has to take into consideration the possible fluctuations in the participation of the families and children as a result of various day-to-day problems affecting them. Also to be taken into account is the high rate of population flow/transfer common in urban poor communities that affect the continuity of certain aspects of the programme.

(8) Another aspect that must be taken into consideration is the possible resistance to new concepts and methods stemming from a lack of understanding and awareness of the goals and objectives of the programme. A necessary prerequisite therefore is the conscientisation of the people and their involvement from the stage of planning through the implementation stage of the programme.

(9) The success of the programme rests primarily on the organisation of the people. Through the organisation, the initiatives and creativity of the people can be harnessed to its fullest.

All of the cited considerations and prerequisites point to the concept of a community-based childcare delivery system that could provide essential childcare based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods by relying on the full participation of individuals and families in the community. The key point is to conscienticise and organise the members of the community in the shortest possible time and carry out the various components of the programme step by step in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. In other words, the programme is primarily a community project with the necessary help coming from PA.

As a preliminary step, the staff of PA must themselves have a sufficiently deep understanding of the various components of the programme as well as the principles and methods of conscientisation, organisation and

mobilisation of the people. They must be well acquainted with the specific childcare problems in the community and their structural causes, specific characteristics of the community and actual resources which they can tap to make their strategies work, and other necessary data and information that can give clear substance to the ideas and concepts they impart to the members of the community. So long as the programme implementors grasp the people's interests, needs and demands through social investigation and close contact with them, they can encourage and guide the members of the community to set their programme into motion.

Programme Implementation: Objectives and Components

In line with the above-mentioned concept of a community-based approach to childcare, PA has defined the following objectives:

(1) assist specific communities in setting-up people-initiated childcare centres with specific emphasis on early childhood education by linking witb community mass organisations and by conducting conscientisation drives among the people in the community;
(2) train and develop community-based childcare workers;
(3) encourage and guide the people in the maximum utilisation of existing community resources;
(4) create an awareness of the economic, social, political and cultural structures that hinder human development in general and childcare in particular;
(5) encourage popular participation in decision-making processes whether in childcare or in other issues affecting the community and the people; and
(6) conduct researches and documentations with the end in view of contributing to the development of indigenous concepts and methods on childcare, rearing and education.

These objectives were pursued in two urban poor communities in metropolitan Manila. Implementaton went through a process that had the following components:

Conscienticising Component

As previously pointed out, the key to success and quality of the programme is the active involvement of the members of the community in general and parents in particular. However, not much can be accomplished in mobilising the people unless they understand the importance and direction of the programme itself. Conscientisation therefore is as much a component as the conventional features of a childcare programme. It may be visualised as laying the foundation for the all round development of the programme by way of giving an advance notice and direction to the target participants.

The specific function of the conscientisation drive is to unite the people's views on the various aspects of childcare and on how to improve it within the context of the objective conditions obtaining within and outside the community. Certainly, differences in perception and opinion exist among the people and unless they unite on the general and specific analysis of their situation and direction of action, the programme cannot possibly succeed, much less take off the ground. Knowledge derived from the different forms of conscientisation serves as a guide to the people on how to set-up and sustain the childcare programme of the community.

The particular goals of the conscientisation drive were:

(1) create an awareness in people on the how's and why's of the many issues affecting childcare in order that they can contextualise their individual problems to structural causes;
(2) arm the people, particularly the parents, with scientific and educational principles to provide them knowledge that would guide policy and decision making at all levels and stages of the programme; and
(3) help the people assess and sum up their experiences as well as the realities of their community in order that they can direct their childcare programme according to their needs and aspirations.

The sweeping forms of conscientisation employed were the holding of extensive seminars and workshops on such topics as child development, responsible parenthood, nutrition and health, consumer education, childcare in the Philippines, socio-economic-political situation in the Philippines, specific problems on childcare in the community, principles of a community-based childcare delivery system, different aspects of a childcare programme, principles of organisational work and others. To follow up the results of these seminars/workshops, consultations with individuals or groups of families were undertaken.

The conscientisation drive was directed to as many people that can be involved in the community. This seeks to break the myth and fallacy that only women are suited and/or relegated to the task of childcare. It needs to be stressed that childcare is a social concern and thus necessitates a collective endeavor of the whole community.

Conscientisation is a continuing process. As such, the seminars, workshops and consultations were held continuously and not only at the start of programme implementation. The only difference was that the follow-up activities consisted primarily of summing-up of the people's experiences and perceptions generated from the implementation of the programme.

Organising Component

To consolidate the gains of the conscientisation drive, a step-by-step process of organising the people of the community around the programme thrust was implemented. This led to the formation of a people's organisa-

tion where there was none, the transformation of an already existing one into an organisation geared towards the programme or the putting up of a community organisation to replace a non-active one.

The setting up of a community organisation is the material expression of the people's unity achieved through the conscientisation drive. It is the expression of the people's willingness and determination to put into practice what they have learned and internalised in the different symposiums, workshops and consultations. Organisations bridge the gap between ideas and practice.

Organisational work within the communities gave way to the emergence of community leaders and other qualified people who eventually took over and manned the different components of the childcare programme. The paucity of professional personnel who will manage and operate the various activities of the programme was resolved since there were always enough qualified people arising from the ranks of the organisation to fill up the personnel needs of the programme. Thus, the programme may be likened to a skeleton taking full flesh.

However, the organisations were not to be tied up solely to the programme. They were also venues through which the people aired their other problems and worked out possible solutions. In fact, some of these problems were more critical and significant to the community. They included social, economic and political issues that played the decisive and leading roles in the resolution of their other problems including those related to childcare.

Another significance of organisational work was its facilitation of the preliminary as well as the in-depth social investigation of the community. General and specific data needed to start and firm up the programme and its components were supplied by the members of the organisation (or its pre-organisational forms) who had reliable and knowledgeable information about the community and its people.

The step-by-step organising process was subdivided into three general stages. The first stage involved the contacting of community members who expressed interest about the programme and willingness to help to set it up in the community. Preliminary conscientisation and social investigation was started at this point. With the help of the initial contacts, more members of the community were also encouraged to attend the conscientisation forums. As more members of the community joined the organised seminars/workshops, the condition was paved for the second stage which involved the setting up of a committee composed of the more active participants in the conscientisation drive who functioned as a preparatory body to the full organisation. They drew up the plans for the setting up and activation of the organisation including the specific committees and their functions. Following this, general meetings were called to discuss and ratify the plans which eventually led to the full organisation of the community association. This was the third and last stage. It must be

noted though that even at the second and third stages, social investigation about the community was continued.

Upon the establishment of the organisation, implementation of the various components of the childcare programme made great strides. Seminars and workshops became more widespread and vigorous. Qualified community members were trained for the childcare aspects of the programme. A suitable child education curricula, based on social investigation, was firmed up. Community resources that could be used for the technical aspects of the programme operation were identified.

Training Component

The programme's backbone are the childcare workers composed primarily of the teachers and childcare workers. They will be the ones responsible for the implementation and management of the childcare related activities of the programme. Since a majority of the childcare workers came from the community and were not professional teachers/child specialists, an appropriate and practical training programme was implemented.

In general, the content of the training curriculum included the following:

(1) National and Local Situation.
Includes the different aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural situation at the national and local levels.
(2) Principles Behind the Community-Based Day-Care Centre.
Functions of a Community-Based Day-Care Centre.
Advantages/Disadvantages of Day-Care Centres.
Operating a Community-Based Day-Care Centre.
(3) Principles Behind Early Childhood Education.
Philosophy of Child Education.
Psychological Theories on Early Childhood Education.
Curriculum Formulation/Building.
(4) Instructional Principles and Teaching Strategies.
(5) Specific Curriculum Content Used in Programme.
(6) Nutrition/Good Health.
(7) Environmental Sanitation.
(8) Maternal and Childcare.
(9) Reporting and Record Keeping.
(10) Exchange of Experiences Between Trainees of Two Pilot Areas.

Training was functional rather than simply theoretical and academic. The trainees were given before the start of the Day-Care Centre a general overview of the theoretical principles contained in the curricula. They then started to teach the children under the close supervision and guidance of PA trainers. The experiences they gathered from actual practice were

used as the focus of subsequent training sessions. In other words, a major part of their training was done while the Day-Care Centre was already in operation. In this way, their theoretical knowledge was enriched on the basis of their practical experience.

In line with this method of training, organisation of the training schedule was in the form of a series of intermittent sessions organised at short intervals. Furthermore, the evaluation of the trainees was based on their actual performance in the day-care centre. It was projected that the intensive part of the training programme would last for at least six months. After this, regular assessment/summing up meetings were the primary venues through which the trainees could further sharpen their theoretical and practical knowledge.

Day-care Centre/Children's House

The heart of the programme were the day-care centres/children's houses which catered primarily to the preschool children in the communities. One centre was set up in each community.

The programme used the developmental-interactionist approach to a day-care instead of the mere custodial/baby-sitting arrangement. Because of the school-like setting in the centre, a broad range of developmental activities with child's play as the medium was designed and implemented to enhance the integrated physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the children.

Two sets of curriculum/programme based on the ages of the children were used in the day-care centres. For young children aged two to three, emphasis was placed on the following:

(1) Physical and Intellectual Skills, including
recognising names and describing simple objects, pictures, events and experiences;
developing understanding and use of vocabulary;
developing fine motor control and eye-hand co-ordination in manipulating small tools and objects;
increasing sensitivity to surfaces, textures, smells, sights and sounds; and
learning to know what to do in a defined play area.

(2) Sense of self or identity, including
learning to feed, dress, undress, wash and toilet oneself;
learning to understand and describe – in words, pictures and gestures – one's own body image in climbing, jumping, running and standing; and
learning to recognise and express one's own feelings.

(3) Relating to Other Children, including
making the gradual change from solitary to co-operative play;
learning to share materials with others; and
developing the ability to defend one's right.

The curriculum for the four to six age grouping was more extensive and intensive.

(1) Intellectual Skills, including
learning the steps or process in the use of the scientific method;
learning to recognise similarities and group objects that are alike in some way;
learning to form concepts;
learning to differentiate between living and non-living things;
strengthening vocabulary; and
developing a longer attention span and the ability to extend projects
over more than one work session.

(2) Relating to Other Children and to a Group, including
learning to share ideas/materials with others;
learning to take turns with tools and materials;
learning to live comfortably with the rules established for and by the group; and
learning to be a contributing member of the group.

(3) Sensory-Perceptual Skills, including
matching, sorting and naming different colours/shapes;
sequencing objects by size;
identifying positions of objects; and
classifying objects by general categories;

(4) Other Intellectual and Language Skills, including
formation of concepts on people to people relationships and knowing what the different roles or occupations people play in society; and
participating in creative/cultural activities such as poetry reading, relating stories, art, movement and music and developing listening skills in the process.

(5) Interpersonal Skills, including
developing co-operation with others by following rules;
helping to establish rules and by playing co-operatively;
sharing and taking turns;
engaging in discussion and activity that involves adult and other children; and
verbalising feelings related to events that arise in everyday life.

(6) Intrapersonal Skills, including
caring for own physical needs;
assuming independent responsibilities for completing tasks;
learning about one's life/family background and learn to respect differences between children; and
learning to take care of one's own belongings.

(7) Relating to Adults

learning to view adults as resources for one's emotional, physical and intellectual needs; and

learning to see adults as individuals with interests, feelings, problems and needs.

An important aspect of the curriculum is the use of play as a medium since it is recognised as the most natural setting for children's learning. It is likewise the medium used by children to translate experience into something internally meaningful to him/her. In general, children at play are able to explore and practise new roles and skills, learn about new materials, acquire social abilities, learn to cope with trying experiences, develop the senses, clarify concepts and provide for emotional relief and expression while creating a period of clearly satisfying delight for themselves.

The other aspects of the day-care including the organisation of time, the plan for work areas or interest centres and programme equipments depended on the actual resources and conditions obtaining in the community.

Enhanced Responsible Parenthood Education

Parents are and still remain the principal influence on the development of their children. In line with this, a day-care should supplement and not supplant the children's own family. However, if the day-care and the parents do not share a common understanding of the children and do not agree on the direction for the children's learning and development, a day-care may subject the children to a second, conflicting set of rules, values and expectations.

There was therefore a necessity for the parents to be aware of and involved in the operations and direction of the day-care centre. Actually, this is an extension of the conscientisation drive of the programme. This component hoped to elicit from the parents a deeper involvement in the actual operations and activities of the centre in order that the development of the child could be ensured and sustained both at the centre and at their homes.

In addition, parents also sought opportunities for their own growth. The day-care centre became a focal point for learning of all who were involved – children, parents and staff. Thus, a systematic and formal way of transfering knowledge to the parents was also necessary.

In relative to these points, the following methods were employed to involve and educate the parents:

(1) membership in decision-making by ensuring that a majority of the members of the executive board of the programme/day-care are parents;

(2) organisation of a Parents' Council as a venue for airing of the general interest and concern of all parents;

(3) regular holding of meetings where parents can get together and share problems and solutions as well as planning of activities;
(4) consultation sessions between parents and day-care staff;
(5) regular holding of parents-staff-teachers conferences;
(6) inviting parents to observe or to participate in day-care activities/ projects;
(7) mobilising parents in culminating activities of children and social events; and
(8) holding of regular seminars/workshops for parents.

Child-care Related Programmes

To ensure the all round care for the children, the day-care staff co-ordinated with various government, private and church offices and institutions to provide nutrition, health and medical services to meet the children's health and nutritional needs. Efforts were made, through the community organisation, to initiate community-wide projects relating to environmental sanitation and economic/productive activities and others. In some of these projects, the children under the day-care, especially those belonging to the older age group, were mobilised to join the other members of the community in implementing the projects.

Research, Documentation and Publication

An important component in the development of the community-based childcare programme is the need to conduct researches on actual case studies of educational concepts and child-rearing practices in the Filipino setting. This is of great value in the development of indigenous scientific concepts and methods, and childcare, rearing and education which unfortunately is lacking in the Philippines today.

The education of Filipino child specialists today is mainly Western oriented. Most of the basic textbooks and materials used in schools deal with Western concepts, theories and methods based on studies and experiments in a Western setting. Since the basic textbooks and references are Western oriented, the curriculum cannot be otherwise. This has resulted in graduates who are dependent on Western theories and methods in the belief that these are universal and value-free. It is therefore inevitable that when they pursue their careers in or out of the academe and apply what they have learned, they are guided by the Western orientation which sometimes are not appropriate or applicable to the Filipino setting. Thus, a vicious circle is formed.

Consequently, the discipline of child psychology and its ramifications in childcare, rearing and education has tended to become elitist and sometimes irrelevant. It could not fully comprehend and apprehend the specific nuances and realities of Filipino life and culture in general and Filipino children in particular. Thus, it cannot truly respond to the needs and aspirations of Filipinos especially those coming from the poor, deprived and oppressed sectors of Philippine society.

It could not be denied that the Philippines is rich in its own national history, culture and traditions which is characteristically Filipino and which may not agree with Western theories and methods. It should be constantly borne in mind that Western concepts, values and methods which are operational within the context of Western culture do not necessarily have the same value and applicability to the Philippines or for that matter to Asian realities. In fact, it may not be surprising that some parts of the components of this programme would have to be radically adjusted or changed in as much as the concepts used in some of the components were drawn from progressive but still Western theories.

It must be stressed though that this does not mean a complete negation of Western theories and methods. As a matter of fact, at this given stage of PA's community-based programme, Western theories have played a crucial role in enhancing the concepts and methods used in the different components of the programme in as much as these theories and methods have been tested in practice in their countries of origin. Notwithstanding their limited applicability in the Philippine setting, the usefulness and importance of Western theories and methods are not denied, only the priority that is accorded it over the development of indigenous concepts, theories and methods.

In line with this, PA is continuously documenting the experiences of this community-based childcare programme as well as those of similar programmes. These findings are published in a newsletter that is regularly distributed to interested individuals and institutions with the hope that these data are used to make theoretical elucidations and practical suggestions. A long-range project of PA in this regard is to form a distinct research and documentation staff that shall undertake more vigorously research and analysis of practical experiences of innovative programmes on childcare.

Problems Encountered

Given that the programme is still on-going and full implementation has yet to be realised, an in-depth evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the programme cannot be made at present. However, a preliminary assessment is given to point out the more glaring problems encountered at this stage of implementation.

Financial Difficulties

Although a community-based approach to early childhood care was definitely less expensive because the resources of the community might be tapped, the programme was still saddled with the problem of generating sufficient funds to maintain its overall operations on a long-term basis. There were minimum expenses entailed in sponsoring seminars and training activities such as the cost of printing and reproduction of learning materials. The permanent working staff of the programme who devote

all their time to it had to be properly compensated since they had no other source of income. An emergency fund had to be made available for certain urgent needs of the children such as medical expenses.

Given the present socio-economic crisis plaguing the country, it was imperative then to supplement the needs of the programme from external sources particularly from concerned and interested benefactors and private funding institutions. However, care should be taken not to become too dependent on these external sources or this will eventually defeat the goal of self-reliance so important to the programme.

Language Problem

Effectiveness in communicating the basic philosophy, principles and methods of childcare, rearing and education is hinged on the appropriate use of the language of the people in the community. This became a crucial problem in the implementation of the programme because the learning materials and the programme itself were written in English.

Although it was obvious that Filipino should be used to impart the concepts of childcare, the fact was that the trainers themselves were products of an educational system that gave primary emphasis to the use of English. The trainers also experienced great difficulty in translating the programme into the everyday language of the people. They were also caught in a dilemma regarding the medium of instruction for the children who will eventually use English when they formally go to school.

However, realising the importance of language in achieving the goals of the programme, a consensus was reached that all efforts must be geared towards developing an indigenous training programme and curriculum in Filipino that will facilitate and enhance the learning process.

Conflicting concerns of the volunteer members of the community

Though highly motivated and generally interested in the aims of the programme, most of the volunteer members of the community were unable to devote consistently their time to the programme. This lack of consistent participation is principally due to the attention given to the more pressing needs of earning a living. All other matters including the aspect of caring for their children were relegated to secondary importance.

Thus, even if there were many volunteers for the programme, they only stayed on for a short period of time afterwhich they were replaced by new ones. Considering the expenses involved in training them and the experience they have accumulated through actual practice, it was unfortunate that they were unable to see through the completion of the programme. This lack of a stable core of volunteers to insure the continuity of the programme greatly diminished its effectiveness.

Lack of co-operation of local officials and government agencies.

Sadly lacking, if not completely absent, is the support of local government officials and institutions to the programme. Neither did they have the time nor did they see the need for the programme. Some were threatened with the idea of people becoming self-reliant and making their own decisions. Others who promised to help eventually lost interest when the hard work of organising began. Also, government agencies were perenially saddled with lack of funds and bureaucratic red tape. Moreover, early childhood care was not a priority in their activities.

Inappropriateness of some parts of the curriculum for early childhood education

Inspite of conscious efforts to develop a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to the curricula, there still remained a dichotomy in the content of the curriculum and the given realities of the children's social environment. The relevance of the content of some parts of the curriculum when applied in the context of urban poor communities had been noted. This was especially observed in the design of some activities for the children in the day-care centres. Certain skills which were taught to middle-class children were automatically applied to the urban poor children. Thus, in the attempt to be broad and comprehensive in scope, there was a tendency to be sweeping and mechanical in the implementation of the whole package of childcare services without attuning them to the specific needs of the community where it was applied.

PROPOSED EVALUATION SCHEME

The dominant evaluation and research methods traditionally used in the Philippines are versions of the American and European models. These emphasise the construction of measuring instruments, the designing of tables of statistical results and interpretation of data by persons detached from the community and not familiar with the real-life situations of the subjects under study. Thus, the methodology of conventional social science research in the Philippines gives rise to an unequal relationship between the researcher and the people.

In keeping with the community-based character of the programme, what is needed is a method of evaluation that would increase the participants' understanding of their own experience through systematic and collective assessments. This method which has been called participatory research involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire process of research. The problem of research originates from the community itself and is defined, analysed and solved by the community.

This approach enables and encourages the researchers to enter into a relationship with the people on an equal level, inviting them to share their views and experiences while sharing their own. The researcher here is a

committed participant, learner and a militant rather than a detached observer. Through this method, the researcher and the participants are expected to improve the practice of and commitment to the task they have set themselves to accomplish, to derive constructive lessons from their experiences and finally to be more motivated in their collective action to promote the philosophy and objectives of the programme.

To be able to apply this method and make research more participatory, evocative and educative, the integration of the researcher in the community is of primary importance. This refers not only to physical integration but also deep involvement and solid identification with the basic interests of the people. Without this partnership and commitment, the essentials of the people's struggle for change cannot be accomplished. The approach must also apply a system of immediate feedback of results in a form not alien to the people but further enhances their learning.

This built-in evaluation scheme consists of the paradigm of action-reflection-action. When correctly applied in practice, this method of analysing social reality is truly the more scientific method of research in the social sciences.

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Agamic Psychology and Its Implication for Child Development Studies **

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By agamic psychology is meant the psychological system embodied in the agamic/tantric tradition that goes by the name of Saiva Siddhanta. While it has been long in the making, it was formalised as a system by Mekander only in the 13th century and elaborated further by a host of able disciples and followers. The system bears partial resemblances to the basics of behaviourism, analytical psychology of C.G. Jung and others. However, it stands on its own with some distinctive features that are important for understanding the structure of human behaviour. Some explorative studies comparing the system with behaviorism and analytical psychology have already been published. In the course of these studies, it became obvious that the systems is foundamentally *developmental* with a distinctive concept of human development that may be of interest to clinical and child psychologists. What is also interesting is that the system is quite thorough-going and comprehensive, and provides a perspective within which we can fit together the different schools of psychology into a coherent whole. Also the system provides a framework for viewing the whole of human development, including moral and religious, within the conceptual framework of *learning*.

One of the most important features of the system is the classification of knowledge into three distinct types, viz. *paca jnanam* (instrumental knowledge), *pasu jnanam* (self-knowledge or knowledge of the subjective self) and *pathi jnanam* (transcendental knowledge or knowledge of Deity.)

This classification is founded upon two basic postulates of the system.

(1) There are three distinct categories of objects – innumerable psyches or selves, a single and unique Deity and a cluster of real entities that delimit, constraint and bind the psyches in many different ways. Any living creature is a Deity-Psyche-Physical Machine-Like system and any attempt to eliminate the Deity or the Psyche in the explanation of creature behaviour will be reductionistic and hence incomplete.
(2) Creature behaviour is essentially that of doing something, acting in order to accomplish something. Furthermore, it is taken to be a case of no changes without action and no action without changes of some kind or another.

Development is viewed as an outcome of actions effected by the creatures and is seen to consist in progressing from instrumental, objective knowledge to subjective self-knowledge and ending up with the tension relieving and self authenticating transcendental knowledge. The development is cognitive in a sense but it is more specifically acquiring new dimensions of consciousness whereby categorically, distinct entities become objects of cognition. It is a process whereby there is both differentiation within a categorical realm and expansion into 'deeper' and hidden object realms. It is also helped along actively by an intelligent Deity through the provision of moral sense within the psyches so that they can sense for themselves the direction of their own progress.

In the paper, an attempt is made firstly, to present the fundamental ideas in a more rigourous manner and secondly, draw out implications for child development studies.

An operational child does not distinguish the propositional awareness from the consciousness of the physical objects. The logical operations are effected upon the physical realms without this cognitive differentiation. The formal operational child on the other hand effects this differentiation and extends the logical operations to the realms of propositional awareness alone.

Overall then, the features of cognitive development as revealed by Piagetian type of studies reveal an increase and a greater differentiation in the psychological space of a child and hence a capacity or power to operate upon a more inclusive realm of objects. In other words, there is reduction in ignorance both in the realms of objects and that of operations.

Piagetian type of studies conducted throughout the world over the last three or four decades have established two things quite conclusively, viz:

(1) the sequence of development is an invariant, and
(2) the onset of the various stages of development may be conditioned by a multiple of ecological, social and cultural factors.

Now the sequence from appearances to objects and then to conceptual and propositional consciousness is natural enough. Similarly, there can be logical operations only subsequent to propositional consciousness. The development from an undifferentiated to differentiated state is also quite consistent with the view of agamic psychology where development is seen as the *reduction* of the scope of ignorance.

How are we to explain the fact that ecological, social and cultural factors influence the onset of different Piagetian stages? From the point of agamic psychology, these contextual factors must be seen somehow to influence the *effort* of the child towards effecting a reduction in the scope of Darkness within itself. How does this take place?

We have seen that in γ-learning, the Supreme Deity is held in vision as smaller deities and that the psyche *becomes* these deities one after another progressively until it becomes indistinguishable from the supreme Deity itself. The learning is one of archetype – assimilation – with the archetypes understood as the individual's visions of the Supreme Deity limited either in universal consciousness (C), universal power (P) or universal love (L). Such primordial images take possession of the psyche, channelling its efforts to reduce the scope of the remaining Darkness within i.e. the hold of *anavam* in its psychic constitution. Now it seems to be reasonable to consider that such image-assimilation processes that is self-conscious during γ-learning, nevertheless, exists during the β-type and α-type of learning processes as well for they are aspects of universal processes. Unlike during γ-learning, however, it may be possible that such primordial images are *unconscious* during α-type and β-type of learning. In other words, what determines the psychic quality of *effort-fulness* of a child may be some image that has taken possession of it, conditioning in an unconscious manner the direction and rate of expenditure of its psychic energy. The inducing of such unconscious images may be something related to the contextual features arising from the ecological, social and cultural environment in which the child grows up. Such a view is quite consistent with what Jung has said in many places to account for the motivational dynamics of an individual, 'S'.

In the context of γ-learning, a transition from the assimilation of one image to another constitutes a reduction in the hold of Darkness caused by *anavam*. This Darkness within the psychic consciousness, it should be noted, provides the primordial impetus for action. The other constraints are derivative, something acquired in the context of this basic struggle. This means that a shift from one image to another constitutes a fundamental process in the development of the intelligence of a person.

This understanding allows us to consider the important question we posed earlier on: What is the mechanism for increasing the intelligence of the child? It would appear that any activity that directly serves to reduce the Darkness within could effect such a development. Since this is related

to image-assimilation processes, we should perhaps look more carefully at such processes in search of such procedures.

It may also be possible to link transitions from one assimilated image to another with *creative* learning. An act of creativity may in fact be a process whereby a person becomes unconsciously aware of a new image that begin to fascinate him. If this is so then, the procedures for making a person more intelligent may be related to the manner in which creative learning is stimulated, encouraged and sustained.

The γ-type of learning which is essentially one of image assimulation and the deepest that is somehow related to the basic universal processes (under the control of the Deity) may constitute the most important strand of learning, conditioning in an important way the other types of learning. It remains hidden and subterranean during the α-type and β-type of learning but surfaces to the forefront of conscious endeavour during the final phase. It is advances of image-transitions in γ-learning that may in fact be the determinant of stages of personal development.